

ABORIGINAL ROCK PICTURES IN QUEENSLAND.

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A number of interesting aboriginal carvings are found on the Burnett river, parish of South Kolan, county of Cook, in the State of Queensland. The drawings are cut upon some flat rocks situated in the wide channel of the river mentioned, at the junction therewith of Pine creek, this point being a little over fourteen miles in a direct line southwesterly from Bundaberg, an important town on the Burnett river. The small township of South Kolan is situated about four miles northwesterly from these carvings, and is the nearest railway station from which they can be reached. The Burnett river, in this locality, consists of a series of large water-holes, between which the stream runs in narrow channels worn in the rocky bed.

The rocks containing the carvings are a kind of hard sandstone; which during the greater part of the year are quite dry, but in times of floods are wholly submerged. Owing to the latter circumstance, and long exposure to the weather, many of the drawings are now scarcely distinguishable. Most of the figures are small, varying from a few inches in length to upward of two feet, representing native weapons, animals, human feet, and several nondescript devices. The outline of each figure is defined by a groove cut into the hard surface of the rock to a depth varying from one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch, the width of the groove ranging from less than half an inch in the smallest to about an inch and a quarter in the largest specimens.

The mode of execution was to make a row of indentations or punctures along the outline of the drawing by means of repeated blows with sharp-pointed pieces of hard stone. The distance between the indentations varies from about a third of an inch to half an inch or more, being farther apart in the larger objects. The space between each puncture was subsequently chipped out, thus making a complete groove around the exterior of the drawing. The positions of the punctures are still discernible, being somewhat deeper and wider than the other portions of the groove—remaining as a

witness of the method adopted by the artist in carrying out the work.

Old residents of the district have known of these rock carvings for twenty-five or thirty years, which were then fresher and more numerous than at present. Very little notice was, however, taken of them, and so far as I am aware, no definite description of them has hitherto been published.

Near Rawbelle, a stock station on the Rawbelle river, one of the headwaters of the Burnett river, county of Wicklow, Queensland, similar carvings to the foregoing have been observed. They are cut on some large rocks on the sides and bed of a watercourse about four miles distant from Rawbelle head station in a westerly direction. The carvings comprise human figures, weapons, feet of men and animals, and several indecipherable representations. The rock on which they are incised is a dark hard sandstone, and the method of procedure in executing the drawings is the same as that described in dealing with the carvings near South Kolan. Some of the pioneers of this part of Queensland have known of these drawings for thirty or forty years, but no attention has been given to them.

About two miles in a northwesterly direction from Augustus Downs' cattle station, on the bank of the Leichhardt river, in northern Queensland, is a large rock containing aboriginal carvings, among which may be mentioned representations of boomerangs of different shapes, shields, and one or two human hands. The rock, which is a kind of conglomerate, is gradually crumbling away under exposure to the weather and from other causes, owing to which some of the native drawings have disappeared since they were first observed some years ago.